

Winners Win

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Winners-Win

SMALL 2/3/14 Political Science and History at Depaul [Arthur Small, Obama runs a ‘stale’ administration, http://www.thedepauw.com/opinion/obama-runs-a-stale-administration-1.3135925#.UvPDUPk_CQA]

What happened?

He did not represent me the way I thought he would. During the 2008 election, he came off as a dynamic political figure. As a young liberal in a bastion of conservatism, Zionsville, Ind., I hoped that Obama could be a man who could rise above ‘political capital’ and the chains of the ‘Washington-Elite’ and become a transcendent political leader.

But President **Obama has become stale, and he seems to lead with little to no conviction.** His premier policy achievement, The Affordable Care Act, has sputtered to start. ‘Obamacare,’ as it is referred to by the American people, was a watered-down bill that looked almost nothing like it did when it was first proposed. The American people, who know very little about what the policy entails, seems to be against everything that The Affordable Care Act stands for.

Most of the blame for the people’s distaste for the bill has to fall on the Obama administration for failing to advertise the most important legislative accomplishment of his time in office. Pundits and rival political factions were able to rip the bill apart because the administration failed to properly publicize the policy.

President **Obama has yet to** use his power as the commander-in-chief to **influence the legislative branch.** **Great presidents** in the past have **put their feet down and demanded that their legislative peers hear what they have to say.** President **Obama has been far too timid** to use the influence granted to him by his office.

In the end, President Obama has missed an opportunity to be considered a great president for two reasons. He is unwilling to exert his power and is willing to compromise with **rivals that have little interest in seeing him succeed.**

Last week’s State of the Union address was the first one I have not watched during the president’s time in office. He and his administration have become stale, even to a bleeding heart liberal like me.

Ext Winners-Win

Wins would rally support and get more wins

ECONOMIST 1—30—14 [Clowns to the left, jokers to the right,

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2014/01/barack-obama>]

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH is supposed to have told his biographer that the bombastic triumphalism of the last movement of his Fifth Symphony, which Stalin compelled him to write, was actually a parody: "It's as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying, 'Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing.'"

I thought of this (probably apocryphal) story Tuesday as Barack **Obama strained to project an image of pragmatic, bipartisan optimism** in his state-of-the-union address. Given how frustrating the past year has been for Mr Obama, one might have expected him to mount the podium and vow eternal vengeance on the Republican party, cursing its leadership to the deepest circles of hell. But nobody rewards a president for pouring out his indignation upon the opposition. The American **people want sunny confidence from their leaders**, and Mr Obama's calm demeanor is one of the reasons his popularity ratings aren't lower than they are, after a year in which Republicans have deployed scorched-earth resistance to his every proposal, brought his agenda to a grinding halt, damaged the economy by imposing needless austerity measures, and nevertheless convinced much of the country that Mr Obama is largely to blame for Washington's paralysis.

The closest Mr Obama got to denouncing the GOP's strategy of total resistance came early on, when he noted that Washington "has been consumed by a rancorous argument over the proper size of the federal government". He conceded that this is "an important debate—one that dates back to our very founding", but he chided Congress (without pointing fingers) for allowing this argument to shut down the government. This rhetorical stance encapsulates everything that makes Mr Obama a successful politician, and also what drives both parties crazy. Mr Obama has built his career on standing above the political fray, acknowledging that he has a partisan agenda, but calling for both sides to compromise wherever possible for the country's sake. This is his vaunted "adult in the room" ploy. Tuesday night, for example, after plugging the achievements of Obamacare, he cracked that he "do[es] not expect to convince my Republican friends on the merits of this law," drawing a round of laughs. Then he scolded Republicans for continuing to stage hopeless votes to repeal the law, and said he would welcome any positive ideas they have to improve it.

It's obvious why Mr **Obama's** wry, pedagogical **tone angers Republicans**. Increasingly, though, it also **angers Democrats**, who are tired of having to throw their weight behind the president's call for reasonable

compromise. Over the past three years, **America's political system has descended into all-out partisan**

warfare. **Democrats want a general in that fight**; they are increasingly dissatisfied that their leader has to spend his rhetorical energy playing the role of the UN envoy calling on all sides to exercise restraint. Since the day after

his re-election, **pundits have been calling on Mr Obama to act more like LBJ: take strong ideological**

positions, **propose major legislation**, **twist arms off and beat people's heads in with them** (in Senator Russell's immortal words), and so forth. (Our Lexington argued that case a few months back.) Earlier this month Isaac Chotiner bemoaned the president's habit of forever presenting both sides of every argument, accusing him of "talk[ing] to us like we're children": "It's as if the reader can't be trusted to just hear one side from the president, because that might (heaven forbid) make him or her think Obama hasn't considered every angle."

Winners win

THE HILL 3/20/13 [Amie Parnes and Justin Sink, Obama honeymoon may be over,

<http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/289179-obama-honeymoon-may-be-over>]

The second-term **honeymoon** for President Obama **is** beginning to look like it is **over**. ¶ **Obama**, who was riding high after his reelection win in November, **has seen his poll numbers take a precipitous fall** in recent weeks. ¶ A CNN poll released Tuesday showed Obama's favorability rating underwater, with 47 percent approving and 50 percent disapproving of Obama's handling of his job. ¶ **Much of the president's agenda is stuck**, with climate change regulations delayed, immigration reform mired in committee negotiations and prospects for a grand bargain budget deal in limbo at best. ¶ On Tuesday, in a decision **that underscored Obama's depleting political capital**, the White House watched as Senate Majority Leader Harry **Reid** (D-Nev.) **announced only a watered-down version of Obama's gun control proposals** would be considered on the Senate floor. ¶ **Republicans**, sensing the sea change, **are licking their chops. They point to the lack of**

movement on Obama's **signature issues**, noting the contrast to the ambitious plans outlined in the early weeks of his second term.¶ "The president set very high goals for himself during his State of the Union, but the reality is **very little of his agenda is actually moving**," Republican strategist Ron **Bonjean** said. **He allowed himself to get caught up in the legislative quicksand**, [and] the cement is beginning to harden. "¶ History isn't on Obama's side. ¶ The last four presidents who won a second term all saw their poll numbers slide by mid-March with the exception of Bill Clinton, whose numbers improved in the four months following his reelection.¶ Clinton may have only been delaying the inevitable. His numbers dropped 5 points in April 1994. Even Ronald Reagan, buoyed by a dominant performance over Walter Mondale in the 1984 election, saw a double-digit erosion by this point in his second term.¶

Obama has yet to complete the first 100 days of his second term. But **without a signature achievement since his reelection, he faces a crossroads that could define the remainder of his presidency**. ¶ White House aides maintain that the 24-hour news cycle makes comparisons to previous presidents difficult. ¶ "I think the nature of our politics now is different than Ronald Reagan's honeymoon," one senior administration official said. "The ebb and flow of politics doesn't follow that model anymore."¶ But observers say a drop in popularity is typical for second-termers.¶ "There may be some typical second-term honeymoon fade happening," said Martin Sweet, an assistant visiting professor of political science at Northwestern University.

"Honeymoon periods for incumbents are a bit more ephemeral."¶ But like most other presidents, Sweet added, "Obama's fate is tied to the economy."¶ "Continuing economic progress would ultimately strengthen the president but if we are hit with a double-dip recession, then Obama's numbers will crater," he said.¶ The White House disputes any notion that Obama has lost any political capital in recent weeks.¶ "The president set out an ambitious agenda and he's doing big things that are not easy, from immigration to gun control," the senior administration official said. "Those are policies you can't rack up easily, and no one here is naive about that."¶ **The White House is aware**

that the clock is ticking to push its hefty agenda, but the official added, "The clock is not ticking because of president's political capital. The clock is ticking because there's a timetable in achieving all of this. [Lawmakers] are not going to sign on because the president's popular." ¶ And administration officials believe they still have the leverage.¶ "There's a decent amount of momentum behind all of this," the official said. "It looks like immigration is closer [to passage] than ever before."¶ Republican strategist Ken **Lundberg** argued that current budget fights "have cut short the president's second-term honeymoon." ¶ He said this could also hurt the president's party, warning "the lower the president's approval rating, the bigger the consequence for vulnerable Democrats."¶ **Voters want solutions**, and if they see the president headed down the wrong path, lockstep lawmakers will be punished in 2014," he said.¶ Democratic strategist Chris Kofinis maintained that as long as he's president, Obama still has the leverage.¶ "Immigration reform doesn't get impacted by whether Obama's poll numbers are 55 or 45," Kofinis said. "Does it make certain things a little more difficult? Possibly. But while his numbers may have fallen, he's still more likeable than the Republicans are on their best day."¶ **Kofinis said the real question for Obama is what kind of emphasis he's going to place on his second term because the public will have less patience than they did during his first.**¶ "The challenge in a second term is the American people look at certain things and have a higher tolerance in a second term," he said. "When they know you're not running for reelection again, they hold you to a higher standard." ¶ Bonjean and other **Republicans are aware that Obama could potentially bounce back from his latest slip in the polls and regain his footing.** ¶ **He has the opportunity to take minor legislative victories and blow them up into major accomplishments—meaning if he got something on gun control, he can tout that that was part of his agenda** and the work isn't over. If he were able to strike a grand bargain with Republicans, that'd be a legacy issue."¶ Still, Bonjean added, "It's not looking so good right now."

AND political capital only makes sense this way

Hirsh 2/7/13 (Michael, Chief correspondent for National Journal, Previously served as the senior editor and national economics correspondent for Newsweek, Overseas Press Club award for best magazine reporting from abroad in 2001 and for Newsweek's coverage of the war on terror which also won a National Magazine Award, There's No Such Thing as Political Capital, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/there-s-no-such-thing-as-political-capital-20130207>)

But the abrupt emergence of the immigration and gun control issues illustrates how suddenly shifts in mood can occur and how political interests can align in new ways just as suddenly. Indeed, **the pseudo-concept of political capital masks a larger truth** about Washington **that is kindergarten simple: You just don't know what you can do until you try.** Or as Ornstein himself once wrote years ago, "**Winning wins**." In theory, and in practice, **depending on Obama's handling of any particular issue**, even in a polarized time, **he could still deliver** on a lot of his second-term goals, **depending on his skill** and the breaks. Unforeseen catalysts can appear, like Newtown. Epiphanies can dawn, such as when many Republican Party leaders suddenly woke up in panic to the huge disparity in the Hispanic vote.

Some **political scientists** who study the elusive calculus of **how to pass legislation** and run successful presidencies **say that political capital is, at best, an empty concept**, and that **almost nothing in the academic literature successfully quantifies or even defines it**. "It can refer to a very abstract thing, like a president's popularity, but there's no mechanism there. **That makes it** kind of **useless**," says Richard Bensel, a government professor at Cornell University. Even Ornstein concedes that the

calculus is far more complex than the term suggests. **Winning** on one issue often **changes the calculation** for the next issue; there is never any known amount of capital. “The idea here is, if an issue comes up where the conventional wisdom is that president is not going to get what he wants, and he gets it, then each time that happens, it changes the calculus of the other actors” Ornstein says. “**If they think he’s going to win, they** may **change positions to get on the winning side. It’s a bandwagon effect**.”

A2 Winners Win

A2 Winners Win

Winners Lose & capital is finite—can't replenish

Beckmann & Kumar 11—Professor of Political Science, UC, Irvine [Matthew N. Beckmann and Vimal Kumar, How presidents push, when presidents win: A model of positive presidential power in US lawmaking, *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 2011 23: 3]

As with all lobbyists, presidents looking to push legislation must do so indirectly by pushing the lawmakers whom they need to pass it. Or, as Richard Neustadt artfully explained:

The essence of a President's persuasive task, with congressmen and everybody else, is to induce them to believe that what he wants of them is what their own appraisal of their own responsibilities requires them to do in their interest, not his...Persuasion deals in the coin of self-interest with men who have some freedom to reject what they find counterfeit. (Neustadt, 1990: 40)

Fortunately for contemporary presidents, today's White House affords its occupants an unrivaled supply of persuasive carrots and sticks. Beyond the office's unique visibility and prestige, among both citizens and their representatives in Congress, presidents may also sway lawmakers by using their discretion in budgeting and/or rulemaking, unique fundraising and campaigning capacity, control over executive and judicial nominations, veto power, or numerous other options under the chief executive's control. Plainly, when it comes to the arm-twisting, brow-beating, and horse-trading that so often characterizes legislative battles, modern presidents are uniquely well equipped for the fight. In the following we employ the omnibus concept of 'presidential political capital' to capture this conception of presidents' positive power as persuasive bargaining.¹ Specifically, we define presidents' political capital as the class of tactics White House officials employ to induce changes in lawmakers' behavior.² Importantly, this conception of presidents' positive power as persuasive bargaining not only meshes with previous scholarship on lobbying (see, e.g., Austen-Smith and Wright (1994), Groseclose and Snyder (1996), Krehbiel (1998: ch. 7), and Snyder (1991)), but also presidential practice.³ For example, Goodwin recounts how President Lyndon Johnson routinely allocated 'rewards' to 'cooperative' members:

The rewards themselves (and the withholding of rewards) . . . might be something as unobtrusive as receiving an invitation to join the President in a walk around the White House grounds, knowing that pictures of the event would be sent to hometown newspapers . . . [or something as pointed as] public works projects, military bases, educational research grants, poverty projects, appointments of local men to national commissions, the granting of pardons, and more. (Goodwin, 1991: 237)

Of course, presidential political capital is a scarce commodity with a floating value. Even a favorably situated president enjoys only a finite supply of political capital; he can only promise or pressure so much. What is more, this capital ebbs and flows as realities and/or perceptions change. So, similarly to Edwards (1989), we believe presidents' bargaining resources cannot fundamentally alter legislators' predispositions, but rather operate 'at the margins' of US lawmaking, however important those margins may be (see also Bond and Fleisher (1990), Peterson (1990), Kingdon (1989), Jones (1994), and Rudalevige (2002)). Indeed, our aim is to explicate those margins and show how presidents may systematically influence them.

PC is Real & Finite

Political Capital is real and key to agenda success – difficult to replenish

PIKA & MALTESE 13 *University of Delaware **University of Georgia [Joseph A. Pika, & John Anthony Maltese, *The Politics of the Presidency*, 8th Edition, Sage] page 353-356

Successful policy leadership results from advancing appropriate solutions to specific problems under favorable political circumstances. Relatively few policy proposals can receive presidential attention and consideration. Some are not compatible with an administration's overall objectives and ideology, but many otherwise acceptable proposals never become part of the president's agenda because limited resources cannot be devoted to them. Quite simply, presidents must establish priorities.²⁴ Presidents establish priorities through what political scientist Paul Light calls a "filtering process," which maintains an orderly flow of problems and solutions to the president and merges them to produce policy proposals. The objectives of the process are to control the flow so that important problems, issues, and alternatives receive attention without overloading the president and to ensure that policy proposals are formulated with due regard to relevant political factors. As they are melded into presidential decisions, problems and solutions pass through two filters: (1) resources and (2) opportunities.

Resources: Political Capital. One of the president's most important resources is political capital, the reservoir of popular and congressional support with which presidents begin their terms. As they make controversial decisions, presidents "spend" some of their capital, a resource they can seldom replenish. Presidents must decide which proposals merit the expenditure of political capital and in what amounts. Reagan, for example, was willing to spend his capital heavily on reducing activities of the federal government, cutting taxes, and reforming the income tax code but not on antiabortion or school prayer amendments to the Constitution. Material resources determine which proposals for new programs can be advanced and the emphasis to be placed on existing programs.

Clinton began his presidency lacking sufficient political capital to enact his ambitious agenda.²⁵ Although he won a clear Electoral College victory and had a 6 percent vote margin over incumbent president George H. W. Bush, he received only 43 percent of the popular vote because of Ross Perot's third-party candidacy. Immediately after the election, the Republican Senate leader, Bob Dole, pointedly claimed to speak for the 57 percent of the electorate who had opposed Clinton. Clinton's New Democrat philosophy was not shared by a majority of congressional Democrats, who were considerably more liberal. Finally, campaign allegations of sexual misconduct and avoiding military service in Vietnam reduced the public's trust and support of the president. These factors limited the capital Clinton had to spend on advocating potentially controversial domestic policies.

George W. Bush also entered office with limited political capital. In the 2000 presidential election, he lost the popular vote to Al Gore and took power only after a protracted dispute over which candidate had won Florida's electoral votes. In addition, he faced the highest disapproval rating of any incoming president since polling began—25 percent according to a Gallup poll.²⁶ In May 2001 he lost the marginal control of the Senate that Republicans had enjoyed since January after Sen. James Jeffords, R-VT, defected and became an Independent. The return to divided government lasted until the 2002 midterm elections and made passage of Bush's initiatives more difficult. But Bush proceeded confidently, as if he had a mandate for his conservative agenda. "I know the value of political capital," Bush said just before his inauguration, "how to earn it and how to spend it."²⁷ He swiftly advanced a few proposals that enjoyed broad support, such as tax cuts and education reform. After 9/11 Bush sought—with mixed success—to parlay his high public approval ratings into support for his domestic policy initiatives.

Two days after he was reelected, Bush again spoke of his prospects during a press conference. "I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and now I intend to spend it [Y]ou've heard the agenda: Social Security and tax reform, moving this economy forward, education, fighting and winning the war on terror."²⁸ But Bush's approval ratings began a downward slide caused by Iraq, a White House scandal, a botched Supreme Court nomination, and faulty relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina.²⁹ As a result, neither of his top two domestic priorities was realized, and the chance to regain capital in the 2006 midterm election disappeared.

Obama entered office with a solid electoral victory based on a vague promise of change as well as public hopes that he was the right candidate to repair the economy. His campaign excited millions of first-time and young voters, and he seemed to embody a new beginning on many fronts—in race relations, bipartisan discussions of common problems, and international negotiations. Expectations were especially high as he entered the White House with a Democrat-controlled Congress, potentially setting him up for a backlash if results proved disappointing.

Riding on the crest of electoral victory and widespread popularity, he advanced an ambitious agenda that ran the risk of overreaching. Carter and Clinton had swamped Congress with too many proposals during their first two years in office, but neither of them had enjoyed as much public support as Obama, who was counting on his ability to link his policy initiatives together as necessary to strengthen the economy in both the short and long term. Health care reform was the crowning achievement of his first two years, but public support declined. Critics charged that Obamacare would add to the growing national debt and was another example of big government intruding on private lives, particularly by mandating that everyone have health insurance.

Obama's political capital evaporated on the night of the 2010 midterm elections, and he hoped to rebuild it in the 2012 campaign.

Winners Lose

Capital Goes away

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http://www.trinidadexpress.com/index.pl/article_opinion?id=161426968]

Like many, I expect much from Obama, who for the time being, is my political beast of burden with whom every other politician in the world is unfavourably compared. As a political scientist, I however know that given the structure of American and world politics, it would be difficult for him to deliver half of what he has promised, let alone all of it. Reality will force him to make many "u" turns and detours which may well land him in quick sand. Obama will, however, begin his stint with a vast accumulation of political capital, perhaps more than that held by any other modern leader. Seventy-eight per cent of Americans polled believe that his inauguration is one of the most historic the country will witness. Political capital is, however, a lumpy and fast diminishing asset in today's world of instant communication, which once misspent, is rarely ever renewable. The world is full of political leaders like George Bush and Tony Blair who had visions, promised a lot, and probably meant well, but who did not know how to husband the political capital with which they were provided as they assumed office. They squandered it as quickly as they emptied the contents of the public vaults. Many will be watching to see how Obama manages his assets and liabilities register. Watching with hope would be the white young lady who waved a placard in Obama's face inscribed with the plaintive words, "I Trust You." Despite the general optimism about Obama's ability to deliver, many groups have already begun to complain about being betrayed. Gays, union leaders, and women have been loud in their complaints about being by-passed or overlooked. Some radical blacks have also complained about being disrespected. Where and when is Joshua going to lead them to the promised land, they ask? When is he going to pull the troops out of Iraq? Civil rights groups also expect Obama to dis-establish Guantanamo as soon as he takes office to signal the formal break with Dick Cheney and Bush. They also want him to discontinue the policy which allows intelligence analysts to spy on American citizens without official authorisation. In fact, Obama startled supporters when he signalled that he might do an about-turn and continue this particular policy. We note that Bush is signalling Obama that keeping America safe from terrorists should be his top priority item and that he, Bush, had no regrets about violating the constitutional rights of Americans if he had to do so to keep them safe. Cheney has also said that he would do it again if he had to. The safety of the republic is after all the highest law. Other groups-sub-prime home owners, workers in the automobile sector, and the poor and unemployed generally all expect Obama to work miracles on their behalf, which of course he cannot do. Given the problems of the economy which has not yet bottomed out, some promises have to be deferred beyond the first term. Groups, however, expect that the promise made to them during the campaign must be kept. Part of the problem is that almost every significant social or ethnic group believes that it was instrumental in Obama's victory. White women felt that they took Obama over the line, as did blacks generally, Jews, Hispanics, Asians, rich white men, gays, and young college kids, to mention a few of those whose inputs were readily recognisable. Obama also has a vast constituency in almost every country in the world, all of whom expect him to save the globe and the planet. Clearly, he is the proverbial "Black Knight on a White Horse." One of the "realities" that Obama has to face is that American politics is not a winner-take-all system. It is pluralistic vertically and horizontally, and getting anything done politically, even when the President and the Congress are controlled by the same party, requires groups to negotiate, bargain and engage in serious horse trading. No one takes orders from the President who can only use moral or political suasion and promises of future support for policies or projects. The system was in fact deliberately engineered to prevent overbearing majorities from conspiring to tyrannise minorities. The system is not only institutionally diverse and plural, but socially and geographically so. As James Madison put it in Federalist No 10, one of the foundation documents of republicanism in America, basic institutions check other basic institutions, classes and interests check other classes and interests, and regions do the same. All are grounded in their own power bases which they use to fend off challengers. The coalitions change from issue to issue, and there is no such thing as party discipline which translated, means you do what I the leader say you do. Although Obama is fully aware of the political limitations of the office which he holds, he is fully aware of the vast stock of political capital which he currently has in the bank and he evidently plans to enlarge it by drawing from the stock held by other groups, dead and alive. He is clearly drawing heavily from the caparisoned cloaks of Lincoln and Roosevelt. Obama seems to believe that by playing the all-inclusive, multipartisan, non-ideological card, he can get most of his programmes through the Congress without having to spend capital by using vetoes, threats of veto, or appeals to his 15 million strong constituency in cyberspace (the latent "Obama Party").

Even if the plan is popular – the next response is against the president

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Most representatives and senators do not feel beholden to any president, let alone one who ran behind them in the last election. I am reminded of advice I received from former Senator Jacob Javits of New York in his last year of life, when I was perplexed and trying to figure out a vote that had just taken place in the Senate. I asked him to explain why certain senators had voted a certain way. And with halting breath he said to me, "You must always realize that senators vote in a priority order. First, they vote for their states; second, they vote out of institutional loyalty to the Senate; and, third, if they have not decided on the basis of either of those, and the president happens to be of their own party, well maybe they will give him a vote. But the state or the district always comes first, the institution second, and only then the president." Another thing to remember is how important back home is. They used to call Reagan the great lobbyist, but I remember sitting in the Oval Office as we lobbied not only in 1981, 1982, and 1983, but also in 1987 and 1988, and member after member would say, "Mr. President, I really want to support your package. The problem is I am not hearing anything from back home." The key was to make sure that we explained why things were important to the district, and why the district really would support what Reagan wanted. The bad news also is that once the president gets a vote he wants, the immediate instinct of most members is to cast the next vote to show their independence from the administration. This is especially true when you have asked them to vote for a big package, in which some provisions did not make sense for their districts but had to be swallowed as part of the overall package. Then their answer is, "I need the next vote to show that I am independent of the White House."